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TITLE: UNIVERSAL TRAILER

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to trailers and particularly relates to trailers having a load carrying bed capable of being lowered within the trailer.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

It is often desirable to load the bed of a trailer, which would be pulled behind a truck or car, at ground level and after the bed has been loaded it is then possible to raise the bed to a position within the trailer for transport. Such a trailer would be advantageous to a home owner moving such equipment as a fridge, washer, dryer or stove where it is difficult to raise such articles to the height of the trailer and position them on the load carrying bed. By having the bed drop to the ground level, this difficulty is avoided. Such a trailer is also useful for loading other equipment and could be adapted for snowmobiles, motorcycles and the like, and/or boats, for example.

Ground loading trailers have been proposed in the past as exemplified by United States Patent 3,788,675, United States Patent 2,478,795 and United States Patent 2,953,266. Most of these patents generally utilize the pivot axis defined by the wheels of the trailer in combination with a pivot arrangement associated with the tongue of the trailer to drop the bed to the ground position. Because of the somewhat complicated relationship of these components, the bed often tips forward and subsequently moves to the back, or first is lowered at the back thereof such that the bed can be at several angles during the loading thereof. This presents problems with respect to the stability of the articles loaded on the

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trailer, as well as the changing characteristics of the trailer with respect to placement of the load.

Furthermore, problems occur with these structures as the pivot access defined by the wheels of the trailer are offset relative to the trailer frame due to the suspension system which further changes the manner in which the bed is lower to the ground.

Although a ground loading trailer is desirable for many applications, it is often desirable to have a tilt load carrying bed to facilitate unloading of such material as gravel, sand or soil. Furthermore, such a tilt trailer would be desirable for launching boats.

According to the present invention, a universal trailer is possible which has improved characteristics with respect to the lowering of the load carrying bed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A universal trailer according to the present invention, comprises an outer frame defining the tongue and sides of the trailer with supporting wheels either side of the outer frame. A load carrying bed is secured to and intermediate of the sides of the frame by mounting means. The mounting means includes at least three linked members rotatably secured to the frame and rotatably secured to the load carrying bed. The link members cause the load carrying bed to move from a generally coplanar position within said frame, to a generally parallel position below and relative to said frame. The trailer further includes means for raising and lowering the bed in the frame whereby the bed may be loaded from a position below said frame and subsequently raised to a generally coplanar position within the frame.

According to a preferred aspect of the invention, the means for mounting the load carrying bed within the outer frame, allows at

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least one of the links to move in a direction opposite the other links such that the rear end of the trailer is lowered relative to the tongue of the trailer with the forward end of the trailer remaining above the frame for angle loading or unloading of the trailer.

Thus, it is possible with the present invention to provide a universal trailer capable of having a load carrying bed positioned for ground loading thereof, or in a different orientation of the means for mounting the load carrying bed, it is possible to angle the load carrying bed for angled discharge.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Preferred embodiments of the drawings are found in the drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the universal trailer;

Figure 2 is an elevation view of the trailer showing ground loading of the load carrying bed;

Figure 3 is a partial view of the forward end of the load carrying bed secured to the tongue of the trailer by link members;

Figure 4 illustrates the first step in orientating the load carrying bed for angled discharge; and

Figure 5 is an elevation of the trailer in the angled discharged position.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The universal trailer generally shown as 2 in the perspective view of Figure 1 includes an outer frame 4 having side member 6 supporting wheels 8 either side of the outer frame with interconnecting angled member 10 connecting the side member 6 with the tongue of the trailer 12. The wheels may be connected in any suitable fashion to the frame and a suspension system could be provided. The wheels do not form part of the mounting

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arrangement for raising and lowering the bed. Within the outer frame the tongue includes two arm members 27 and 28 which define a space therebetween for receiving the extension 26 of the load carrying bed 20. The load
 5 carrying bed 20 is pivotally secured at points 22 and 23 to the link members 40 and 42 which are pivoted to the outer frame at positions 15 and 16. The link members include extensions thereof 44 and 46 secured by cross members 48 and 50 adjacent the tongue of the trailer.
 10 These links in combination with the extensions and members 48 and 50 define a lifting frame used to provide a mechanical advantage in lifting of the bed from the ground loading position generally shown in Figure 2 or the angled loading position in Figure 3 to the generally coplanar
 15 position of the load carrying bed relative to the frame of the trailer as shown in Figure 1.

Adjacent the forward end of the load carrying bed 20 is extension member 26 which is received between the two arms 27 and 28 secured to the outer frame. A pair of
 20 link members 30 and 32 are pivotally secured to the arms 28 and 27 respectively and pivotally secured to the extension member 26. These link members in combination with link members 40 and 42 and the frame and bed preferably define a parallelogram linkage whereby the
 25 link members in the generally coplanar position of the load carrying bed 20 within the outer frame 4 of the trailer are generally aligned such that link members 30 and 32 may be urged through the center point to effect a reverse rotation of these link relative to links 40 and 42
 30 during angled discharge as generally shown in Figure 5.

As shown in Figures 1 and 2 the winch generally designated as 56 is secured to the tongue 12 of the trailer and includes a cable 54 trained about pulley 52
 35 secured to the lifting frame generally defined by extensions 44 and 46 in combination with the cross members

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40 and 50. Thus the pulley 52 is secured adjacent the forward end of the lifting frame and the cable is then secured to the extension member 26 of the load carrying bed. By removing the pin 34 which locks the load carrying bed in the generally coplanar position as shown in figure 1, it is then possible to unwind cable from the winch 56 to allow the load carrying bed to move downwardly in a generally parallel relationship with the outer frame of the trailer to the ground loading position generally shown in Figure 2. As links 40, 42, 30 and 32 generally define a parallelogram linkage the angulation of the load carrying bed relative to the frame maintains its parallel relationship. Furthermore, as the links rotate, the load carrying bed moves slightly forward relative to the frame. This movement of the load carrying bed to the ground loading position as shown in Figure 2, forces the load carrying frame with the pulley 52 to the position as generally shown in Figure 2. As can be appreciated, the extensions 44 and 46 provide a mechanical advantage when the winch 56 is operated to wind in the cable 54. In this way, fairly large loads can be easily raised once placed on the load carrying bed by this arrangement. The general movement of the links 30 and 32 and the extension member 26 relative to the arms 27 and 28 can be appreciated from Figure 3. In addition, an aperture 62 is shown through the extension 28 and aperture is shown in the extension member 26 of the load carrying bed which in a generally coplanar position of Figure 1, are aligned for receiving the locking pin 34. Once the locking pin is received within the apertures, the load carrying bed is fixed within the trailer.

Turning to Figures 4 and 5, the operation of the trailer will be explained and the ability of the trailer to assume the angled discharged position shown in Figure 5.

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As partially shown in Figure 4, the outer frame 26 including the pulley 52 is above the extension 26 of the load carrying bed 20 and pulley 52 with the cable 54 is positioned such that it can draw the extension 26 upwardly whereby link 30 is drawn through its center point which would be the generally coplanar position of Figure 1. The pin 34 can then be replaced in aperture 62 of arms 26 and 27 whereby the extension 26 now rests on this pin. Upon subsequent unwinding of cable 54, both the lifting frame and extension 26 of the load carrying bed are moved upwardly while the rear links 40 and 42 move downwardly until the load carrying bed strikes the ground.

In order to return the load carrying bed from the angled discharged position of Figure 3, the cable is again wound on winch 56 urging the load carrying frame downwardly, causing the rear portion of the load carrying bed to be raised by legs 40 and 42 and causing the forward portion of the bed to move downwardly guided by the movements of links 30 and 32. In this case, it may be desirable to move the cable from extension 26 of the load carrying bed and secured to the outer frame such that the extension is not being urged in two directions. It is advantageous to have the cable secured to this extension during the ground loading operation as shown in Figure 2, however it is slightly preferable to have it secured to the outer frame when used in the angled discharged position.

When the load carrying frame has been brought into abutment with the outer frame of the trailer, extension 26 will be received between the arms 27 and 28 such that apertures 60 and 62 align and pin 34 may be reinserted into the apertures locking the load carrying bed in the coplanar position.

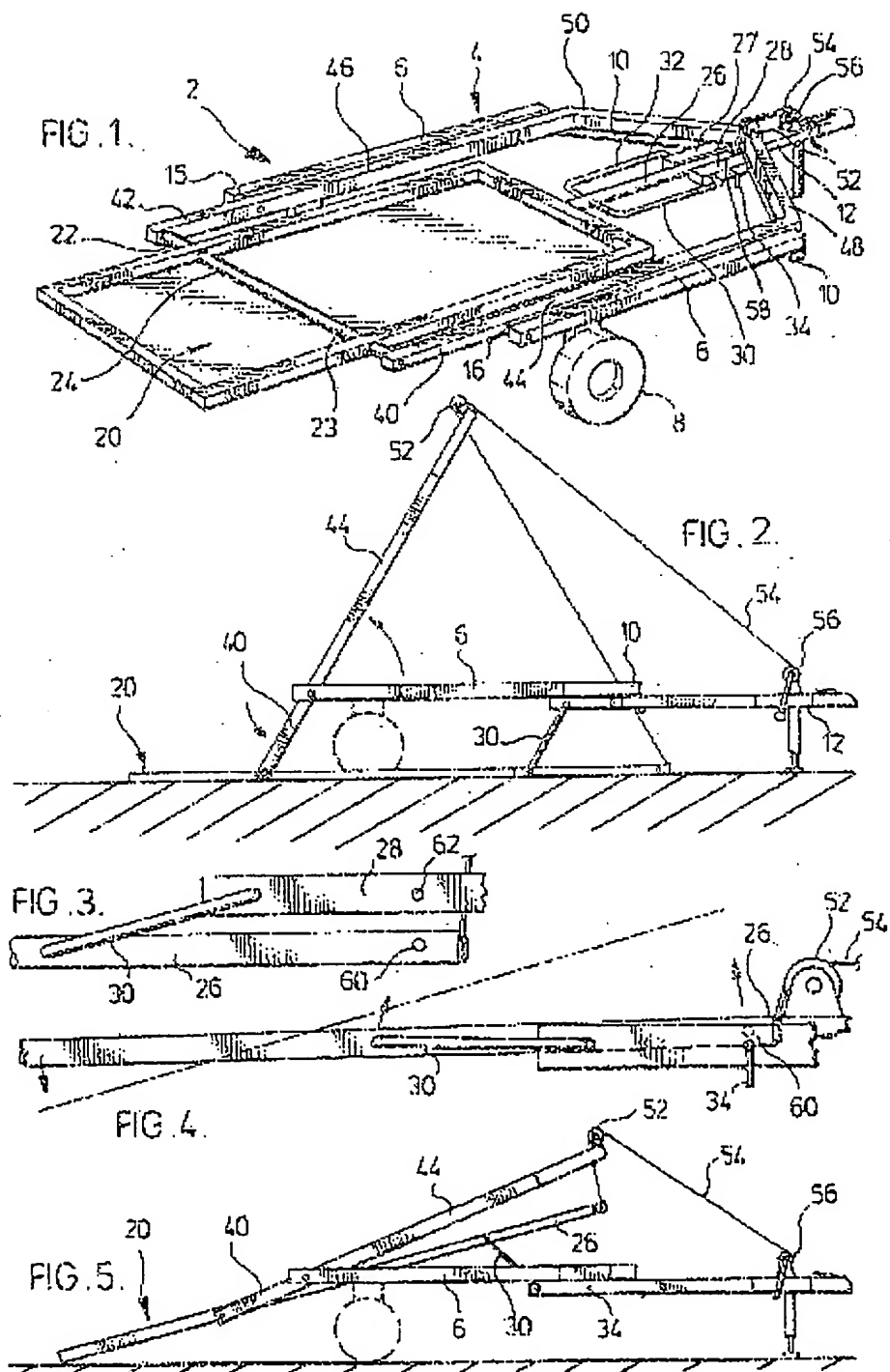
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Although the application has been described with respect to the use of a parallelogram linkage defined by links 30, 32, 40, 42, the load carrying bed 20 and the outer frame of the trailer, it can be appreciated that other linkage arrangements are possible. In the case of a linkage arrangement other than the parallelogram linkage, it may be necessary to provide a slot in one of the connections of the forward link members 30 and 32 for example, to allow the linkage arrangement to pass through the center position in order to achieve the opposite rotation of these link members relative to links 40 and 42 for angled discharge. Certainly the invention is not limited to the use of a parallelogram linkage, although this is preferred.

Furthermore, the use of the trailer has been described with respect to the mechanical advantages provided by the extensions 44 and 46 interconnected by members 50 and 48 at the forward portion of the trailer. Such a mechanical advantage can be provided in another manner such as the use of pulleys and cables associated with the outer frame and the individual link members, particularly links 40 and 42. Once again, the use of the lifting frame is preferred, however other lifting arrangements could be provided while still using the link mounting arrangement for securing the load carrying bed within the outer frame of the trailer.

Although various preferred embodiments of the present invention have been described herein in detail, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, that variations may be made thereto without departing from the spirit of the invention or the scope of the appended claims.

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THE EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION IN WHICH AN EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OR PRIVILEGE IS CLAIMED ARE DEFINED AS FOLLOWS:

1. A trailer comprising
 an outer frame defining the tongue and sides of the trailer with supporting wheels either side of said outer frame,
 a load carrying bed secured to and generally intermediate the sides of said frame by mounting means, said mounting means including at least three link members pivotally secured to said frame and pivotally secured to said bed,
 said link members causing said load carrying bed to move from a generally coplanar position within said frame to a generally parallel position below said frame with said links moving in the same direction,
 said mounting means further permitting said platform to pivot within said frame in a manner to lower the rearward end of said bed relative to the front end of said bed for angled loading or unloading of said trailer by the reverse rotation of at least one link member secured adjacent the forward end of the trailer,
 and lifting means for raising and lowering said bed within said frame.

2. A trailer as claimed in claim 1 wherein said link members includes a pair of link members pivotally secured to opposite sides of said outer frame adjacent the outer end thereof and pivotally secured to said bed to lift the rear portion of said bed and at least one additional link pivotally secured to said bed adjacent the forward portion thereof and intermediate said tongue and said pair of links for controlling the movement of the forward portion of said bed.

3. A trailer as claimed in claim 2 wherein said lifting means includes a lifting frame which is an extension of said pair of links, said lifting frame extending forwardly adjacent either side of said outer frame, said lifting frame providing a

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mechanical advantage for lifting said bed.

4. A trailer as claimed in claim 3 wherein said lifting frame is exterior to said bed when said bed is generally coplanar with said outer frame.

5. A trailer as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3 wherein the position of the wheels of said trailer are essentially independent of the position said links are secured.

6. A trailer as claimed in claim 3 wherein said lifting means further includes a winch and cable, said lifting frame being connectable to said cable, said winch being positioned and secured on said trailer for moving said lifting frame towards and said outer frame for raising of said bed.

7. A trailer as claimed in claim 6 wherein said cable is secured by a pulley to said lifting frame and is secured to said bed adjacent the additional link, said winch being secured to said outer frame adjacent the trailer tongue whereby said bed is urged to the generally coplanar position with movement of said lifting frame towards said outer frame.

8. A universal trailer comprising
 an outer frame defining the tongue and sides of the trailer with supporting wheels either side of said outer frame,
 a load carrying bed secured to and generally intermediate the sides of said frame by mounting means, said mounting means including at least three link members rotatably secured to said frame and rotatably secured to said bed,
 said link members causing said load carrying bed to move from a position generally within said frame to a generally parallel position below said frame for ground loading of said bed,

and means for raising and lowering said bed within said frame, whereby said bed may be loaded from a position

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below said frame and subsequently raised to a position generally within said frame.

9. A universal trailer as claimed in claim 8 wherein said mounting means upon reverse rotation of at least one link causes said platform to move within said frame in a manner to lower the rearward end of said bed relative to the tongue of the trailer for angled loading or unloading of said trailer.

10. A trailer as claimed in claim 8 wherein said lifting means includes a lifting frame integral with at least two opposing links positioned to opposite sides of said bed when said bed is generally coplanar with said outer frame.

11. A trailer comprising
 an outer frame defining the tongue and sides of the trailer with supporting wheels either side of said outer frame,
 a load carrying bed secured to and generally intermediate the sides of said frame by mounting means, said mounting means including at least three link members pivotally secured to said outer frame and pivotally secured to said bed,
 a pair of said link members being secured to said outer frame adjacent the rear portion thereof and to opposite sides of said outer frame with said pair of link members being interconnected by said bed to move as a unit for lifting and lowering the rear portion of said bed,
 at least one of said link members being pivotally secured adjacent the forward portion of said bed and pivotally secured adjacent the forward portion of said outer frame for lifting and lowering the front portion of said bed,
 said link members causing said load carrying bed to move from a transporting position generally within said frame to a generally parallel bed loading position below said frame and means for raising and lowering said bed.

12. A trailer as claimed in claim 11 wherein said pair of link members include extension means for cooperating with said

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means for raising and lowering said bed, said extension means providing a mechanical advantage for raising and lowering said bed.

13. A trailer as claimed in claim 11 wherein said link members, said bed and said outer frame define a parallelogram linkage for raising and lowering said bed.

14. A trailer as claimed in claim 12 wherein said link members, said bed and said outer frame define a parallelogram linkage for raising and lowering said bed.

15. A trailer as claimed in claim 12, 13 or 14 wherein said at least one link member adjacent the forward portion of said bed is capable of reverse rotation relative to said pair of link members whereby said bed can be moved to an angled position relative to said outer frame with the rear portion of said bed lower than said frame and the forward portion above said frame.

16. A trailer as claimed in claim 12, 13 or 14 wherein said lifting means includes a cable and winch arrangement, said cable being secured to said frame in a manner to control the raising and lowering of said bed with no respective winding and unwinding of said cable by said winch.

17. A trailer as claimed in claim 12, 13 or 14 wherein said lifting means includes a cable and winch arrangement, said cable being secured to said frame in a manner to control the raising and lowering of said bed with no respective winding and unwinding of said cable by said winch, said winch being secured adjacent the tongue of said trailer.

18. A trailer as claimed in claim 12, 13 or 14 including pin means associated with said frame and said bed for locking said bed in the raised position within said frame.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention relates to a universal trailer having an outer frame defining the tongue and sides of the trailer with supporting wheels either side of the outer frame. A load carrying bed is secured to an intermediate or sides of the outer frame by mounting means which include at least three link members rotatably secured to said frame and rotatably secured to the bed. The link members cause the load bearing bed to move from a position generally within said frame to a generally parallel position below the frame. The trailer also includes a lifting device for raising and lowering the bed within the frame, whereby the bed may be loaded at a position below the frame and subsequently raised to the position within the frame.